

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Authority**



ANNUAL EQUALITY DATA AND GENDER PAY GAP REPORT

April 2023 - March 2024



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Our Equality Commitment

Welcome to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority's Annual Equality Data and Gender Pay Gap Report for 2023/24.

At Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of the services we provide to our communities. The Fire Authority play an important role in setting direction and supporting the Chief Fire Officer to lead the Service and driving improvement and inclusivity throughout the workplace. Together this sets out our shared ambition for fair, just and compassionate workplace in support of both staff and the communities we serve.

Delivering services that meet the needs of our communities through a workforce that is committed, representative and engaged is paramount to achieving our vision of 'Creating the Safest Community'.

As a team, we strive to ensure equality is embedded across the whole organisation by continuously promoting inclusive principles, through the work of our elected members, our leadership teams, our partners and our exceptional employees and volunteers. We see equality as a fundamental part of each of our core values.

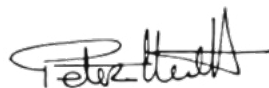
Our aim is to deliver a service that is innovative, a service that is transparent and inclusive, and a service that embraces the diversity of our communities. To achieve these aims, we work hard together to remove inequalities, eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity through positive working relationships between our workforce and our communities.

We want to continually ensure that the services we provide are accessible to everyone and that we have a workforce that reflects the unique diversity of Tyne and Wear's communities. As a Service, we are on a journey of continuous improvement and we would appreciate any comments that you may have in relation to this report.

In writing this report, we can confirm that the published information contained within it is accurate.



Phil Tye
Chair of Tyne and Wear
Fire and Rescue Authority



Peter Heath KFSM
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Clerk to Tyne and Wear
Fire and Rescue Authority

Introduction

The Annual Equality Data and Gender Pay Gap Report provides data and information about our employees and the people who we provide a service to within Tyne and Wear. The findings enable us to identify equality priorities and development areas which inform our equality objectives.

This combined report also helps us to ensure we are meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which require us to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics and
- foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Public authorities are required to publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the PSED annually. Data and information has been collated for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The Authority is also required to publish Gender Pay Gap data under The Equality Act 2010 (specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 and for this, the data is collated for a snapshot at 31 March 2024.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) undertakes a regular, formal inspection programme which our Service is assessed against. The programme and framework focuses on three main themes:

- how effective each Fire and Rescue Service is at preventing, protecting against, and responding to fire and other risks;
- whether the Fire and Rescue Service provides value for money; and
- how well the Fire and Rescue Service looks after its people and ensures fairness and diversity.

On our last assessment in 2021-22, we were confirmed as a "Good" service, across each of the three inspection pillars of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People. The Full report can be accessed through the following link:

[Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22 – Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service - HMICFRS \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

Equality Developments in 2023/24

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is central to our culture, behaviours and core values.

Our elected Fire Authority Members are also supported with understanding the Service's core values. The Service ensures the strategies, plans and processes we use enhance the delivery of our vision and embeds equality, diversity and inclusion within our Service and community.

We have made positive progress to further diversify the workforce, particularly through Operational Firefighters and Corporate Employee recruitment. The Service ensures diversity has continued to enhance our workforce; and by developing the talent of existing employees, we have provided development opportunities that benefit both individuals and the Service. Our Community Volunteers support employees in the delivery of fire safety messages and assist our Community Advocates in their work with community groups.

Our positive culture and active promotion has continuously improved, helping to embed equality and diversity within our Service. The feedback from the previous report has allowed us to focus on our inclusion outcomes, challenging us to improve upon an already impressive body of achievement in this field and will help to shape our priorities and set the direction of travel going forward.

Following the level 3 Disability Confident Leader Award in August 2019, the Service has been successful in maintaining this accolade after collating and submitting evidence to support the renewal in early 2024.

In March 2024, we successfully met the criteria for renewal as an Endometriosis Friendly Employer. We were the first UK Fire & Rescue Service to sign up and therefore hoped to inspire our peers in recognising how this illness affects our employee's.

The Service continues to support our employees, creating an inclusive workplace by maintaining our Stonewall Diversity Champions, Women in the Fire Service and the Asian Fire Service Association Champion memberships. Actively engaging in these national memberships highlights our consistent commitment to promote inclusion and further improve the diversity within our sector.

Our long history of collaborative working with Partner Organisation's is a key aspect of our continuous improvement to drive towards all areas. We actively promote and enhance diversity, through supporting and attending events such as Pride, Diwali and the Mela.

This year also saw the continued support for employees within our existing employee network groups; Disability & Wellbeing (formerly Disability), LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer), Gender, Multicultural (formerly BAME Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) and Diversity of Thought. The network groups work to champion our ongoing commitment to greater employee involvement in the decision-making process and further increase personal development opportunities.

We have continued to demonstrate our commitment to equality and inclusion with the groups hosting online awareness conferences events to promote and gain a greater understanding of underrepresented groups and the protected characteristic they represent.

The introduction of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 promoted collaborative working with other Emergency Services sharing best practice in all areas of health and wellbeing.

Building upon this, we have continued to develop partnership and collaboration between Emergency Services and stakeholders, creating a multi-agency approach to equality to support shared delivery of key community safety themes at events and initiatives.

In Summer of 2023, the Service undertook a comprehensive cultural review, commissioning an independent evaluation by Jagtar Singh Associates. The review combined with the feedback from our independent staff survey facilitated by Hive yielded valuable recommendations, prompting us to advance our cultural journey with the implementation of “The Culture Talks.” This initiative, developed by the Inclusion and Organisational Development team, engaged all employees across the Service to better understand their concerns and gather their input on potential solutions. As a result of these discussions, we have formulated a Service-wide action plan that has informed both departmental and organisational initiatives, allowing us to address key issues and drive meaningful change.

The Occupational Health Unit (OHU), Health & Safety Department, Health and Fitness Advisor and Human Resources functions, work in collaboration to support the health and wellbeing of individuals in the workplace which include aspects such as pre-employment medical assessments, health surveillance, fitness for work advice, support with employee absences from work and providing advice in relation to reasonable adjustments which can be considered and they also provide onwards referrals to supportive services such as counselling, physiotherapy and DSE assessments.

The specific aim of the OHU Service is to provide evidence based medical advice pertaining to fitness for work, management guidance on supporting individuals in work and advice pertaining to reasonable adjustments to enable an individual to return to and/or remain at work.

The Health and Fitness Advisor contributes and supports the Service and its employees by collaborating and holistically working with HR, OHU, Learning and Development (L&D), Operational employees and line managers, to create individual fitness and health programming for employees that have returned from periods of sickness absence. The advisor provides continued and tailored support on health and fitness areas such as weight management, injury prevention, injury recovery and fitness testing for operational fire fighters.

The Fitness Advisor is primarily focussed on improving the return to work and attendance of those employees with injuries or returning from periods of sickness absence, whilst supporting the need to assure fitness levels of Operational Fire fighters and managers. They also have oversight of the wider management of station fitness equipment and gymnasiums. The Health and Fitness Advisor is the Service lead for the design, delivery and programming of Trainee Fire Fighter physical training and conditioning.

Health Promotion and Wellbeing Sessions continue to be delivered to all TWFRS employees. Each year the topic delivered is developed from the feedback from those attending the previous round of sessions. The topic for April 2023 to March 2024 was ‘Mental Health,’ this included information about some common mental health conditions, a case study, self help and further resources available for support.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training courses are also being delivered regularly to both TWFRS employees as well as external organisations. These courses equip attendees with the skills to;

- Recognise poor mental health and provide first-level support
- Encourage someone to access professional help and other support
- Practice active listening and empathy
- Converse with improved mental health literacy
- Understand boundaries and confidentiality
- Practice self-care

Annual refresher training is also provided to all TWFRS trained and qualified MHFA's.

The Trauma Support Team (TST) is made up of volunteers from across the Service. Following any incident involving a fatality, the TST will make contact with both Operational and Control employees to offer Trauma Support Sessions.

Trauma Support Sessions give employees the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings, following exposure to a potentially traumatic incident, to educate and prepare them for any future reactions and to signpost them, both internally and externally, to further support services, if required. Annual Refresher Training is also provided for all of the TST members.

We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our employees both physically and mentally. Evidence has shown that providing high quality health promotion to employees leads to positive attitudes about workplace equality, diversity and inclusion.

Work Force Data

Throughout the year, the Service has taken a more evolved approach to the collection of equality data to encourage and allow employees to identify themselves with more descriptive and relevant terms.

Our employee management information system enables employees to update their own personal information using a self-service system. All employees have access to the system to enable them to amend their own data when required. All employees are encouraged to declare and update their protected characteristics on the self-service system.

In compiling this report, TWFRS has used the approved head count of 904 employees as of 31 March 2024, as the baseline comparator.

Each characteristic is reported below:

Age	2022 / 23	2023 / 24	Gender	2022 / 23	2023 / 24
17-24	41	40	Female	221	230
25-35	187	195	Male	673	674
36-45	301	300	Prefer not to say	0	0
46-55	271	272	Not stated	0	0
56-65	87	92	Total	894	904
66+	7	5			
Total	894	904			

Sexual Orientation	2022 / 23	2023 / 24
Bi	6	8
Gay	8	8
Heterosexual	771	787
Lesbian	9	8
Prefer not to state	87	81
Not stated	13	12
Total	894	904

Disability	2022 / 23	2023 / 24
No	639	652
Not Stated	221	209
Yes	34	43
Total	894	904

Religion	2022 / 23	2022 / 23
Atheist	149	146
Buddhist	2	2
Christian	345	344
Hindu	1	1
Islam	3	3
Judaism	1	1
None	217	240
Not Stated	18	18
Other	20	19
Prefer Not To Say	129	122
Spiritualist	9	8
Total	894	904

Ethnicity	2022 / 23	2023 / 24
Arab	2	2
Asian Or Asian British - Indian	2	2
Asian Or Asian British - Pakistani	2	2
Asian Or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	1
Black Or Black British - African	0	1
Black Or Black British - Caribbean	1	1
Gypsy Or Traveller	1	1
Mixed - White And Asian	4	4
Mixed - White And Black African	2	2
Mixed - White And Black Caribbean	2	1
Not Known	6	6
Other Asian Background	1	1
Other Mixed Background	3	4
Other White Background	12	12
Prefer not to say	26	24
White - British	817	827
White - Irish	2	3
Not stated	10	10
Total	894	904

Authority Members

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (TWFR) is the democratically accountable body that oversees the activities of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS). The Authority is comprised of 17 members, 16 of which are elected members, nominated by the five constituent councils of Tyne and Wear, the seventeenth being the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria. The members of the Authority have provided their equality data:

Age	2023 / 2024
36-45	1
46-55	2
56+	9
Not stated	5
Total	17

Disability	2023 / 2024
No	9
Yes	3
Not stated	5
Total	17

Sexual Orientation	2023 / 2024
Bisexual	1
Gay / Lesbian	1
Heterosexual	10
Not stated	5
Total	17

Gender	2023 / 2024
Female	3
Male	9
Not stated	5
Total	17

Ethnicity	2023 / 2024
White British	12
Not stated	5
Total	17

Religion / Faith	2023 / 2024
Atheist	3
None	1
Christian	8
Not stated	5
Total	17

Our approach to Gender Pay Gap Reporting

In addition to the Public Sector Equality Duty reporting requirements, the Authority is also required to publish Gender Pay Gap data under The Equality Act 2010 (specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

In addition to the Public Sector Equality Duty reporting requirements, the Authority is also required to publish Gender Pay Gap data under The Equality Act 2010 (specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

The gender pay gap differs from equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between differing genders who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. The gender pay gap shows the differences in the average pay between genders.

For the purposes of gender pay gap reporting, the definition of who counts as an employee is defined in the Equality Act 2010, in this case all of our employees and volunteers are included. The information is a snapshot as of 31 March 2024. Our report includes the following calculations:

- The mean pay gap
- The median pay gap
- The proportion of males and female employees in each salary quartile band
- The mean bonus pay gap
- The median bonus pay gap
- The proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment

Following a review of the guidance, detachments and over time payments are included in this calculation. For the purposes of this report, ordinary pay includes the following information before tax and any deductions for employee pension contributions:

- Basic pay (pay attributed to responsibilities of the role of which is applied equally)
- Allowances (additional responsibility over and above the basic responsibilities of the role)
 - Instructors allowance
 - Continuous professional development
 - Flexible duty officer rota allowance
 - Strategic rota allowance
 - Essential car user allowance
 - Urban search and rescue allowance
 - Detachment and acting up payments.

For the purposes of calculating the hourly rate of our employees the following hours per week have been utilised:

- Employees in roles governed by the 'National Joint Council for local government services National agreement on pay and conditions of service', (The 'Green Book') - 37 hours
- Firefighter to Watch Manager roles including day crewing - 42 hours
- Firefighter to Area Manager day shift conditioned roles - 42 hours
- Officers conditioned to the flexible duty rota - 48 hours
- Area Manager roles conditioned to the executive rota - 48 hours
- Principal Officers conditioned to the executive rota continuous cover pattern - 78 hrs.

Mean and Median pay gap

As of 31 March 2024, we employed a total of 904 employees however due to the reporting requirements, the actual number of employees who were paid in March 2024 was 893; 224 (25%) were female and 669 (75%) were male.

The mean pay gap is 10.17% (*11.19%), equating to an hourly rate difference of £1.83 (*£1.91), and the median pay gap is 4.84% (*9.08%).

To explore the gender pay gap difference, further analysis of the data is required.

Grey Book Employees	No. Employees	Mean	Mean Pay Gap
Male	554	£18.10	6.79% (*7.52%)
Female	48	£16.87	

Grey Book Employees - Control	No. Employees	Mean	Mean Pay Gap
Male	8	£16.22	-2.12% (*-16.14%)
Female	24	£16.56	

Green Book Employees	No. Employees	Mean	Mean Pay Gap
Male	107	£18.14	11.82% (*16.04%)
Female	152	£16.00	

Total	No. Employees	Mean	Mean Pay Gap
Male	669	£18.08	10.17% (*11.19%)
Female	224	£16.25	

* Figures relate to previous year.

For all of our Green Book roles, a grade structure that uses the National Joint Council Pay Scales. This year has seen a decrease in the mean pay gap of for these roles, this can be attributed to amendments to department structures and a number increases in grades for current post holders arising from increased responsibilities.

The data has shown that for our Grey Book (Control) employees, there is negative pay gap, meaning females are paid more than males. This is due to the amount of females in higher paid roles within the department and our focus on positive action recruitment.

With females occupying only 19% of higher level management posts, compared to 81% occupied by male employees, this helps to explain the gender pay gap within our Service.

Salary Quartile Bands

The quartile distribution detailed below gives an indication of the proportion of females and males and in each quartile band.

	Female	% Female	Male	% Male
Top	43	19% (*17%)	180	81% (*83%)
Mid Upper	39	17% (*16%)	184	83% (*84%)
Mid Lower	46	21% (*23%)	177	79% (*77%)
Lower	96	43% (*42%)	128	57% (*58%)

* Figures relate to previous year.

The high quartile salary band consists of 81% male employees, indicating they are the highest earners within the organisation. The composite of the salary bands for these employees are disproportionate to non-operational roles due to allowances attributed to Grey Book operational roles, resulting in our operational employees being paid at a higher rate of pay from entry (Firefighter) level through to strategic leaders (Chief Fire Officer).

Bonus Payments

We do not offer a bonus scheme and do not make bonus payments; therefore, the following calculations are not applicable:

- The mean bonus pay gap
- The median bonus pay gap
- The proportion of males receiving a bonus payment
- The proportion of females receiving a bonus payment

Creating an inclusive workforce

Our commitment to equality and inclusion is central to our culture, behaviours and core values.

This is delivered through the Service's strategic plans, supported through our Leadership, which supports our employees, managers and members in understanding the behaviours that enable our core values. The focus of our strategy and plan is to ensure that the processes we use enhance the delivery of our vision to embed equality, diversity and inclusion within our Service and community.

Employee Network Groups

Our Employee Network groups aim to help the Service continue to improve our position with regard to equality and diversity and improve the position as an employer of choice.

It is important to ensure that the services TWFRS provide are reflective of the needs of all employees and of the wider community we serve.

A network champion has been appointed from the Executive Leadership Team to each employee network group. This is crucial in offering strategic advice and guidance, as well as progressing projects.

Multicultural Network Group

The Multicultural Network Group was established in 2015 and was launched to provide advice and support to Employees, the organisation and stakeholders on all multicultural related matters.

This includes a diverse range of areas including how we support multicultural employees, how we engage with our communities and how we strive to improve our understanding of the diverse make-up of Tyne and Wear.

Members of the Network Group have attended many awareness sessions and celebrations including:

- Diwali
- Ramadan
- Refugee week
- Vaisakhi
- Holocaust Memorial
- Eid Celebrations

The group have also created and translated Basic Fire Safety booklets in the following languages, including Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish Surani, Ukrainian, Polish, Chinese, Spanish, Bangla.

Disability and Wellbeing Network Group

The Disability and Wellbeing network group (DNG) supports employees and visitors across the Service in respect of disability awareness, education, access, reasonable adjustments and general support as required.

Working in partnership with other employee network groups and the Inclusion team, the DNG trialled an employee Menopause peer support group. The aim of the group is to provide support all employees experiencing menopause issues either directly or indirectly. The group have also introduced practical adjustments and equipment to align with the Service Menopause Policy.

The DNG is also continuing work on Endometriosis with individual information pages set up on the intranet.

As part of Endometriosis awareness month in March 2024, a Tea for Endo fundraising bake sale was held in SHQ which was well attended and enabled greater awareness to be shared.

Gender Network Group

The Gender Network continues to proactively promote gender equality in the Service, raise awareness of key issues, support the decision making process and develop the knowledge and skills of its members.

The Service has been a long time supporter of the White Ribbon Campaign and there is a huge desire for this to continue. This was demonstrated on the 25th November when the service helped to achieve the goals White Ribbon Day through awareness sessions.

This year our newly appointed Chief Fire Officer, Peter Heath and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Stewart Nicholson both signed the White Ribbon Pledge.

Chief Fire Officer Heath, said: "As Chief Fire Officer, I was proud to once again sign the pledge as it highlights the importance of White Ribbon Day, and shows just how serious I regard the values of the campaign, and as chief will look to promote them."

Chief Fire Officer Heath, continued: "Inclusion, safety and feeling valued are central to our Service and across the whole workforce, I want an environment that supports this. We all have a vital part to play in promoting the values of the White Ribbon campaign and together we can make a difference.

"White Ribbon Day isn't about solely singling out men and boys as such, as we are committed to look at the wider issues across society as a whole, and by doing so it allows us to implement change."

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Stewart Nicholson, said: "It's imperative that we use the national platform of the White Ribbon Day to address the important issues being raised on Saturday.

"As an organisation where our primary focus is to help keep people safe from harm, we must look to continue our support towards the campaign and use it as an opportunity to identify its key priorities, and see where we can further implement it within our day-to-day operations as a Service."

In some situations behaviours and words in the home, workplace, or across society as a whole may seem harmless but normalising them ignores the short- and long-term effects on women and can lead to more extreme violence.

The work of White Ribbon UK is aimed at encouraging everyone, especially men and boys, to make the White Ribbon Promise to never use, excuse or remain silent about men's violence against women. A promise that over the years has already been taken up by tens of thousands of people across Europe.

The Service continues to be an accredited organisation, supported by our Executive and Senior Leadership Teams.

International Women's Day 2024

To celebrate International Women's Day a lunch and learn event was organised by our Prevention & Education Team (P&E) supported by the Gender Network group.

The event took place over teams on Wednesday 6 March 2024, the Director of Corporate Services was a keynote speaker alongside the Chief Executive of North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and the Deputy Chief Constable of Northumbria Police.

The event, Inspiring Inclusion, aimed to collectively forge a more inclusive world for women.

On Friday 8 March 2024 employees from across the Service came together to celebrate International Women's Day, highlighting the essential work being delivered all year round by our TWFRS Gender Network Group.

The Gender Network provides advice and support to employees, the organisation and our stakeholders on all gender-related issues, including maternity and paternity provisions, work-life balance arrangements and equal pay.

LGBTQ+ Network Group

The LGBTQ+ network group aim to create an environment where people can be themselves at work, allowing them to perform at their very best. This means employees feeling empowered to bring their whole-selves to the workplace.

The network group continue to demonstrate commitment to LGBTQ+ employees and wider community by continuing to be a 'Diversity Champion' member of Stonewall.

The network group has ensured continued support to our employees and their family members, providing confidential and practical support to a number of individuals and their families around LGBTQ+ issues. The employee network has an X Account and a confidential email address and the growing confidence in the network co-chairs has contributed towards this objective. This essential and primary provision continues to form a significant and crucial part of the work. This also includes work around mentoring and supporting our LGBTQ+ allies, as well as increased cross network collaboration, both internally and with our blue light partners.

The network group works hard to promote the Service as a fully inclusive employer, and in July 2023 the network members took part in Northern Pride. Events kicked off with the 5km run on the Friday evening, followed by the Pride Blue Light Breakfast with our peers and colleagues, which leads into the march through Newcastle upon Tyne city centre, before finishing at the event ground for the rest of the weekend.

The group has taken part in various engagement events and online lunch and learn sessions, as well as actively supporting LGBTQ+ visibility and remembrance days. In February 2024 the members organised and attended an LGBTQ+ engagement event alongside Northumbria Police on Scotswood road in Newcastle.

In March 2024, the network group and the Service supported the 13th Hadrian Cup at Percy Park in North Shields. This is an annual rugby 10's tournament organised by the Newcastle Ravens which is the biggest inclusive rugby tournament in Europe, celebrating the LGBTQ+ community. A total of thirty-six teams attended from across the UK and Europe, including Norway, Plymouth, London, Aberdeen and Brighton, as well as the first ever Trans-gendered team. To promote inclusivity, a touch tournament was included which facilitated the event to be opened up to mixed groups, allowing females to take part. The network group and the Service were proud to provide and sponsor the match balls and referee shirts for all games, showing our ongoing support for equality, diversity and inclusion.

Diversity of Thought Network Group

The Diversity of Thought Network Group encourages individuals to embrace their authentic selves at work. Employees feel more valued when they are able to voice their opinions without fear, even when their perspectives differ from others.

As we work together towards the TWFRS 2025 Vision Programme, with Inclusion, an All-Hazards Approach, and Data and Digital at its core, we recognise that innovation, fresh thinking, and diverse approaches to emerging challenges are essential. Imagine what we can achieve if every individual feels empowered to bring their whole self to work.

The Network provides peer support while fostering an environment that encourages and explores new ideas. One of its key objectives is to raise awareness by demystifying neurodiversity and emphasising the benefits of diversity of thought.

The Network recently hosted a successful celebration of Neurodiversity Week from 18th to 24th March, offering webinars on various neurodiversity topics. This event was well-received and allowed both members and the wider workforce to engage with valuable resources, showcasing the Network's ability to drive meaningful discussions and awareness within the organisation.

Recruitment and Promotion

From 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the Service has been actively recruiting for permanent, temporary and fixed term posts. The Service is promoted as an employer of choice, encouraging applicants from underrepresented groups to apply, across all recruitment campaigns, ranging from managerial roles to a variety of support roles.

The Service has undertaken promotion processes at varying levels including Crew, Watch, Station, Group and Area Manager filling current vacancies and creating candidate pools to furnish future vacancies.

Firefighter Recruitment

The recruitment of Firefighters is crucial to ensuring the effective management of operational deployment in line with budget and risk critical activities to support the delivery of the Strategic Community Safety Plan.

Fire and Rescue Services from across the United Kingdom continue to face challenges in the diversification of their workforce, in particular within operational roles, i.e. Firefighters.

Since 2018 when TWFRS resumed Firefighter recruitment for the first time after a period of 9 years, the Service has continued to strive towards having a workforce that reflects the communities we serve. The Service acknowledges that there is some way to go in achieving this aim and there are continuing development plans on how we can attract candidates from diverse backgrounds.

An Inclusion team has been established who continue to assess the effectiveness of current Positive Action activities.

From 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, 1 trainee course has taken place, the diversity of the trainee Firefighters in terms of our under-represented groups appointed onto the course was as follows:-

- Sexual Orientation: 22% of trainees identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or in another way.
- Sex: 18% were female.
- Ethnicity: 9% were from an ethnic minority background.
- Disability: 18% of recruits had a disability.

Appointments and Promotion

Throughout 2023/24 we have recruited for various roles across all departments resulting in 60 new appointments and 49 internal promotions.

Applicant Information

Gender	No. of Applicants	Age	No. of Applicants
Female	252	16-24	67
Male	416	25-35	245
Unknown	13	36-45	196
Total	681	46-55	132
		56+	41
		Total	681

Sexual Orientation	No. of Applicants	Ethnicity	No. of Applicants
Bi	29	Asian Or Asian British - Bangladeshi	3
Gay	16	Asian Or Asian British - Indian	25
Lesbian	10	Asian Or Asian British - Pakistani	3
Heterosexual	594	Black Or Black British - African	18
Prefer not to say	30	Black Or Black British - Caribbean	2
Prefer to use my own term	2	Chinese	2
Total	681	Mixed - White And Asian	5
		Mixed - White And Black African	4
		Mixed - White And Black Caribbean	4
		Not Known	2
		Other Asian Background	9
		Other Black Background	1
		Other Ethnic Group	1
		Other Mixed Background	1
		Other White Background	9
		Prefer Not To Say	7
		White - British	574
		White - Irish	11
		Total	681
Disability	No. of Applicants		
No	592		
Prefer not to say	41		
Yes	48		
Total	681		
Religion	No. of Applicants		
Athiest	70		
Buddhist	4		
Christian	273		
Hindu	16		
Islam	9		
Sikh	2		
None	265		
Other	8		
Prefer not to say	26		
Spiritualist	8		
Total	681		

Promotion Information

Age	No. of Applicants	Ethnicity	No. of Applicants
16-24	1	Mixed - White And Asian	1
25-35	3	White - British	34
36-45	23	Prefer not to say	2
46-55	11	White - Irish	1
56-65	1	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1
Total	39	Total	39

Gender	No. of Applicants	Sexual Orientation	No. of Applicants
Female	5	Heterosexual	31
Male	34	Bisexual	1
Total	39	Prefer not to say	7
		Total	39

Religion	No. of Applicants	Disability	No. of Applicants
Athiest	7	None	24
Christian	19	Not stated	15
Judaism	1	Total	39
None	5		
Other	1		
Prefer not to say	4		
Spiritual	1		
Not Stated	1		
Total	39		

Training and Development Opportunities

The Learning and Development Department continues to support all employees, to promote high performance and continuous improvement. Working collaboratively and inclusively, ensuring our employees and their performance is the best it can be. By supporting employees to acquire, maintain and continuously develop the appropriate technical and professional skills and underpin knowledge specific to their role. Creating the right learning environment and investment in appropriate resources will continue to be the foundation to our training and education success. Blended learning and digital technology will be integral to our learning and development delivery model.

Key areas of focus from 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 were:

- Introduction of 'Development Pathways' to ensure Leadership and Management development for all those identified as future leaders via Career Conversations and PDR. These Development Pathways are modelled on the NFCC Core Learning Pathways and the NFCC Leadership Framework.
- Introduction of improved evaluation system for all learning activity across the Service, allowing easier access for people. This has resulted in increased feedback rates from 9% in 2023 to 95% in 2024.
- Introduction of Operational Competency Recording system which is aligned to National Operational Guidance training specifications.
- Continued development of trainee Firefighters, trainee Control employees and Community Safety via the use of TWFRS led Apprenticeships
- Development of training our employees in the delivery of adult education
- Review of training facilities to facilitate an 'all hazards' approach to training and therefore improve Firefighter safety.

Gender Reassignment

We are unable to publish specific employee data to ensure anonymity. Members of our LGBTQ+ network group have continued to assist us in developing our policies, procedures and training in conjunction with our Gender network group.

We have provided advice and guidance for managers and employees with the publication of our transgender policy and revised guidance.

This supports information in other Service policies such as the Equality and Diversity Policy and Dignity at Work Policy.

We have also actively supported Trans Awareness week, raising our Trans flag at Service Headquarters, and our employees showed their support by displaying their Trans epaulettes.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Feedback from our employees has shown that our flexible approach has enabled them to continue to have a rewarding career with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. We had seven employees take maternity leave during this reporting period, all of which have returned to their respective roles within the workplace.

This is very positive and can be attributed to our work-life balance policies and flexible working options, available to all employees. Our overall package supports employees to return to work with flexibility and balance.

Shared parental leave is available to our employees, this enables eligible mothers, fathers, partners and adopters to choose how to share time off work to care for their child. The policy allows parents more flexibility in how to share the care of their child in the first year following birth or adoption. This provides a wider range of options for our employees and their partners in managing the demands of both the workplace and home.

Flexible working applications and success rates

The scheme of flexible hours for employee's forms part of the Employee Friendly Work/Life Balance policy, integral to the Authority's Diversity and Equality Policy. This is part of a range of areas including formal schemes of flexible working hours, job sharing, part-time working, term time working, seasonal working, home working and, in some instances, combinations of these arrangements, which are kept under constant review.

The ultimate aim of these schemes is to address the needs of employees and the Authority in providing a service to the community that we serve. Within the period of 2023/24, 12 employees requested flexible working, 8 of these have been successfully implemented. All of which were Green Book conditioned employees.

Reasonable Adjustments

During 2023/24 our Health and Wellbeing team facilitated 47 alternate duties, phased return to work and/ or reasonable adjustment assessments, enabling employees to be present at work or return to work sooner following an absence or injury. Our experienced Health and Wellbeing team take a proactive approach to reasonable adjustments, with each individual assessed on a case by case basis and bespoke support provided.

To ensure that all employees and managers have an understanding of reasonable adjustments, a flow chart has been published highlighting each individual's role. This includes how access to work applications are conducted. Our employees have successfully completed these applications and their requirements have been implemented.

Grievances and Dismissals

There were 18 grievances recorded in 2023/24, which is an increase in comparison to seven recorded in 2022/23. Of the grievances raised, these were in relation to pay, bullying, harassment and discrimination. Of all the grievances heard, one was upheld, seven were not upheld, six were partially upheld, and four were no further action required.

Out of the 18 grievances, six appeals were received. Four were not upheld and two were partially upheld. There were 18 disciplinary cases recorded in 2023/24 with one dismissal following a disciplinary process.

Leavers from the Organisation

The Service collects and monitors leaver information enabling us to continue to address any possible equality imbalances within the workplace and ensures compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty requirements.

Our employee's views are important to us, with suggestions or feedback being considered to continually improve the Service. Leavers are invited to complete an online questionnaire and are also invited to undertake an exit interview with their line manager which provides us with important feedback.

Gender	No. of Leavers
Male	42
Female	21
Prefer not to say	0
Not stated	0
Total	63

Ethnicity	No. of Leavers
Any Other White Background	2
Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group -	
White and Black Caribbean	1
White British	54
Ethnic Origin Not stated	6
Total	63

Sexual Orientation	No. of Leavers
Gay	1
Heterosexual	47
Lesbian	2
Not stated	13
Total	63

Disability	No. of Leavers
Not stated	14
Not Disabled	46
Disabled	3
Total	63

Religion	No. of Leavers
Christian	24
None	14
Not stated	13
Other - please specify	12
Total	63

Community Engagement 2023/24

Fire Safety Visits by Ethnicity

The aim of our Fire Safety Department is to undertake a programme of engagement with the business community within Tyne and Wear. This engagement focuses on the building risk, occupancy type and previous compliance within the built environment and not on the ethnicity of those that operate, own or use a certain premises type.

The Fire Safety Department is driven by the Services risk based inspection programme, which assesses the known risks within the built environment to ensure workload is directed to those most at risk or those most likely to be non-compliant. However, so that we address the most immediate risks within our community we undertake a substantial amount of reactive work, which is driven by concerns raised by partner agencies, members of the public or internally from other departments.

We also attend every commercial premises following a fire and engage with the local area so that they are aware of any new risks. We have also undertaken a large programme of engagement with those responsible for high rise residential premises. The main aim was to ensure that they were compliant following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry outcomes, and to provide assurances to the National Fire Chiefs Council that TWFRS are aware of the buildings and risk from fire in these buildings. This work still continues.

The activities of the Fire Safety Department are delivered in accordance with the Services Enforcement and Engagement policy, which is underpinned by the Regulators' Code, to ensure all enforcement action is delivered fairly and in a transparent manner relative to the risk identified.

Home Safety

In 2023/2024 Prevention and Education activities have almost returned to pre-pandemic levels, including the delivery of our Safe and Well visits. Over the last year, we have reviewed how we identify and engage with those residents at greater risk from fire. As a result of those evaluations, we have introduced new procedures and working practices that enable us to better support the most vulnerable residents of Tyne and Wear.

Although the Service no longer records ethnicity as part of a Safe and Well check, the Service does record details of the vulnerabilities of occupiers and this is pertinent to our equality recording. 88% of Safe and Well visits were delivered in premises with at least one vulnerability.

Safe and Well Checks	2022 / 2023	2023 / 2024	% Difference
Overall visits conducted	19,778	20,762	+ 5%
Premises where a vulnerability was encountered	9,346	18,192	+ 95%
Vulnerabilities recorded*			
65 and over	7,743	11,749	52%
Cognitive loss	423	859	103%
Dementia	428	909	112%
Frailty / falls	801	1,587	98%
Hearing loss	1,328	2,522	90%
Heart / Lung disease	1,009	2,380	136%
Immobile	424	595	40%
Language	116	134	16%
Learning disability	260	432	66%
Mental Health / illness	491	907	85%
Physical disability	512	1,574	207%
Restricted mobility	2,996	5,268	76%
Sight loss	460	924	101%

* There may be more than one vulnerability per household.

Community Engagement

The Community Engagement Team (CET) has made strides in creating new relationships with vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups as well as re-connecting with groups they have worked with previously.

Continuing the work they did last year, the CET has had their 'Basic Fire Safety' booklet translated into 6 languages including Ukrainian, Polish, Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish and Romanian. These booklets are key for spreading Fire Safety messages across multiple communities.

The Service has been actively involved in community events over the last year, such as Pride, Mela, Chinese New Year, Vaisakhi, Passover and Eid. These events have provided opportunities to engage with a wide variety of community members and continue to deliver key fire safety messages.

Conclusions and Objectives

During 2023/24 we have made positive progress to further diversify the workforce, particularly through Operational Firefighters, Corporate employees and Community Volunteer recruitment.

The Service ensures diversity has continued to enhance our workforce; and by developing the talent of existing employees, we have provided development opportunities that benefit both individuals and the Service. Our Community Volunteers adapted their roles to support the most vulnerable community members across Tyne and Wear.

We will continue to monitor our recruitment processes to ensure that they assess key skills, assessing the candidate's suitability for the role. This ensures fairness across all candidates, showing transparency throughout the recruitment process with objective and evidence-based decisions.

Our senior leaders champion flexible working and job sharing, with this benefit being available to all employees. We will continue to enable our employees to work more flexibly, creating a better work/life balance for all.

Our core values guide all of our employees to promote and embrace inclusivity and foster positive working relationships. We continue to support our employees with our five employee network groups; Disability & Wellbeing, LGBTQ+, Gender, Multicultural and Diversity of Thought.

We continue to support our network groups work to champion our ongoing commitment to greater employee involvement in the decision making process and further increase personal development opportunities.

From the development of an Inclusion Policy, the Service has specifically improved the equality, diversity and inclusion of our workforce.

The inclusion objectives will help to further diversify our workforce to ensure we reflect the whole community; to have clear, fair and transparent routes to both employment and progression and to have a positive culture where everyone is valued and takes pride and ownership of their actions and behaviour.

